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Viewing cable 05LIMA1171, PERU: MULTI-TON COCAINE SEIZURES IN THE FIRST TWO

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- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
05LIMA1171	2005-03-08 22:43	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Lima

Appears in these articles:

<http://elcomercio.pe>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LIMA 001171

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR INL/LP, WHA/AND
DEPT FOR ONDCP FOR D. GETTINGS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/08/2015
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: PERU: MULTI-TON COCAINE SEIZURES IN THE FIRST TWO MONTHS OF 2005

REF: A. LIMA 138 B. LIMA 230 C. LIMA 658 D. LIMA 773
[1](#)E. LIMA 971 F. LIMA 1015

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY J. CURTIS STRUBLE, AMBASSADOR,
REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (C) BEGIN SUMMARY: In the first two months of 2005, the Peruvian National Police (PNP), supported by DEA's Lima Country Office (LCO), have tracked and seized record-breaking amounts of cocaine HCL/base - close to 5 metric tons - compared to 7.11 metric tons of cocaine HCL in the whole of [1](#)2004. These intelligence-based seizures (reported in reftels) show intense involvement of Mexican and Colombian operations/cartels in the Peru drug market, bypassing Colombia as a source or transshipment point. It also shows the preference of these groups for large maritime shipments of cocaine, concealed in commercial cargo. END SUMMARY

THE OPERATIONS

[1](#)2. (C) The Potato Case: LIMA 138
On January 5 in Lima, an LCO-sponsored PNP Special Investigative Unit (SIU) seized 326 kgs of cocaine HCL bricks, wrapped in brown tape and concealed in a cargo of potatoes, that originated from the VRAE (Apuimac/Ene River Valley), one of Peru's source zones for coca cultivation. Intelligence sources indicated that the cocaine was going to be trucked to the port of Guayaquil, Ecuador. Six Peruvian nationals were arrested; subsequently 3 Colombian nationals were arrested in Ayacucho in connection with the case (no specific Colombian organization has been identified).

13. (C) The Hollow Wood Case: LIMA 230

On January 8, joint LCO and PNP-SIU anti-narcotics maritime units, along with Peruvian Customs, stopped almost 200 kgs of cocaine HCL from entering the U.S. The cocaine was concealed inside hollowed-out lumber, surgically glued back together, in a commercial wood shipment destined to leave the Port of Iquitos for Port Everglades, Florida. Seven Peruvian nationals, associated with Mexican-based trafficking organization Ismael Zambarra Garcia, were subsequently arrested (for further developments see paragraph 9).

14. (C) The Tupperware Case: LIMA 658

On February 2, police discovered 813 kgs of cocaine HCL in tupperware-type plastic containers about to be shipped, possibly to Europe/Russia, from the Port of Callao (Lima). A British Customs/LCO/PNP team coordinated this 5-month investigation to make the seizure. Two Peruvians were immediately arrested; two Mexican nationals were arrested the same day attempting to board a flight to Mexico.

15. (C) The Tanker Case: LIMA 1015

On February 9 and 10, LCO and PNP, with the assistance of NAS, seized 1.2 metric tons of cocaine HCL concealed in an ISO tank (a maritime container used for transporting liquid). PNP officers detained the container in a PNP compound as it was being trucked to the Port of Callao, with a U.S. destination. Members of the PNP and NAS entered the tank and discovered a false lining/compartments in the front of the tank. Retired USCG Chief Petty Officer Bryan Tuttle, NAS's Deputy Port Security officer, began cutting into the false compartment; an explosion resulted, tragically killing officer Tuttle. The PNP arrested 13 Peruvian nationals connected to this case in the coastal cities of Lima, Huacho, Sullana and the coca source zone of Tingo Maria; more arrests are pending.

16. (C) The Pan-American Highway Case: LIMA 773

On February 11, LCO and PNP/SIU seized about 140 kgs of washed cocaine base concealed in a truck, and arrested 3 Peruvian nationals at KM 65 of the Old Pan-American Highway in Northern Peru near the Ecuadorian border. Intelligence operations reported the cocaine had been collected in the VRAE and was en route to Mexico.

17. (C) The Taxi Case: LIMA 971

On February 25, LCO/PNP operations resulted in the seizure of 1 metric ton of cocaine HCL in bricks from a residence and a warehouse in Lima. Fourteen of the 25 persons arrested were Colombian, 6 Mexican and 5 Peruvian - working for a Colombian drug trafficking organization led by Rowinson and Rowan Rios. These Colombian brothers, residing in Peru, have been smuggling cocaine out of Peru to Spain for the past two years via Mexico. The hero of this case was an undercover PNP policeman, posing as a taxi-driver, who persuaded one of the Rios brothers to enter his cab, then to hire him as his private chauffeur. The policeman convinced the trafficker to conduct his negotiations and meetings in his vehicle, equipped by DEA with GPS and recording devices that documented every movement of the organization.

18. (C) The Refrigerated Truck Case:

On March 2, LCO and PNP seized 519 kgs of cocaine HCL linked to another shipment for export as containerized cargo from Lima to Mexico. The 243 bricks, wrapped in beige tape, were unloaded from a conceal compartment in the roof of a refrigerated truck. Two Peruvians were arrested.

19. (C) The Tractor-Trailer Case:

In further investigating the Hollow Wood case in Iquitos (para 3), SIU discovered that additional members of the Mexican trafficking group were coordinating a second shipment of cocaine from San Martin, a coca source zone, to the northern port of Lambayeque. On March 2, as the tractor-trailer containing the cocaine HCL traveled north, the PNP conducted a traffic stop of the vehicle and seized an additional 430 kgs of cocaine HCL hidden in the walls. The driver and his companion, both Peruvians, were arrested; investigation of this organization continues.

110. (C) These improved results are directly related to DEA's decision to channel resources and prioritize investigations involving major drug trafficking organizations (DTOs). NAS has also concentrated Ports and Riverine Program resources on major maritime collection points. These seizures indicate that DTO's are using commercial maritime shipments to move major loads out of Peru. An area of ongoing interest will be the results of DEA's Special Testing Chemical Analysis of representative samples from each of these seizures to analyze its origin. These multi-ton seizures may well come from increasing production of cocaine, resulting from expanding cultivation of coca in Peru.

STRUBLE